

REMARKS**I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS**

In the Office Action mailed November 2, 2005, the Examiner noted that claims 1-12 were pending, and rejected claims 1-12. Claims 1-12 are canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 13-16 are added herein. Thus, in view of the forgoing claims 13-16 remain pending for reconsideration which is respectfully requested. No new matter has been added.

II. CLAIMS 1-5 AND 8-11 ARE REJECTED UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) AS BEING UNPATENTABLE OVER SHIMAN ET AL. (U.S. 2002/019827) IN VIEW OF HAMP ET AL. (U.S. 6,816,175).

Claims 1-5 and 8-11 are cancelled herein. Therefore, the rejection is moot.

III. NEW CLAIMS

New independent claims 13, 15, and 16 recite an apparatus, method, and computer-readable medium with the feature of sorting e-mail messages into a hierarchical structure. For example, claim 13, recites *a sorting unit which sorts e-mail messages into a hierarchical structure according to sender addresses each comprising a plurality of labels representing different levels of domain names, referring first to the label representing a top-level domain*. Dependent claim 14 further recites *a list displaying unit places the label representing the top-level domain as a root node of the tree form*. The cited reference, Shiman et al. (Shiman), fails to teach these features alone or in combination with Hamp et al. (Hamp).

Shiman discloses sorting e-mail messages by author (*i.e.*, sender), while Hamp teaches displaying a tree view. The new claim 13, for example, recites *sorting e-mail messages into a hierarchical structure according to sender addresses each comprising a plurality of labels representing different levels of domain names, referring first to the label representing a top-level domain; and a list displaying unit which displays a list comprising indicia of the labels of the sender addresses arranged in tree form*. Therefore, claim 13, for example, recites *a hierarchical structure according to sender addresses wherein each address comprises a plurality of labels that represent different levels of domain names. The top-level domain is followed by successive subordinate domains. For example, the email address, zzz@uuu.co.jp has three labels, "uuu," "co," and "jp" to represent the sender's domain. The top-level domain is "jp."* Therefore, the hierarchical order of those domain labels is opposite of the order of their appearance in the e-mail address.

Therefore, since the last label represents a top-level domain, the resulting hierarchical

tree will have the top-level domain name in its root node. Therefore, as recited in claim 14, for example, the *list displaying unit places the label representing the top-level domain as a root node of the tree form and then attaches thereto the other labels representing successively lower levels as branch nodes*, as illustrated in the left half of figure 13 in the specification. The list displaying unit further displays the title of corresponding messages as illustrated in the right half of figure 13.

Both Shiman and Hamp disclose an algorithm wherein documents are sorted based on treating the document name or address as a single character string. Neither reference teaches sorting e-mail messages based on a *plurality of labels representing different levels of domain names, referring first to the label representing a top-level domain*, as recited, for example, in claim 13. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that new independent claims 13-16 are patentable over Shiman in view of Hamp. The claims are therefore in a condition suitable for allowance. Approval and entry of the claims is respectfully requested.

IV. CONCLUSION

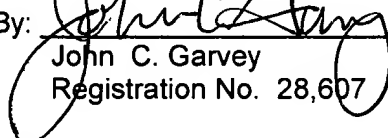
There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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